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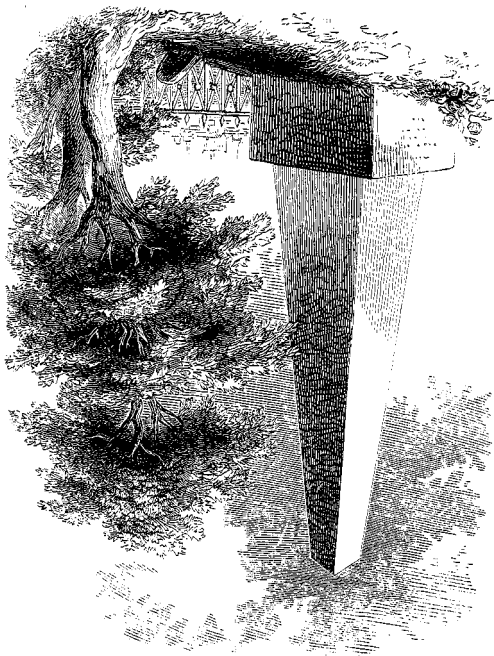
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Louisa's little grave is marked by a plain white slab
beneath the shade of Dr. S——'s monument.



Louisa.


LOUISA,
MY FIRST-BORN:

A Sketch for Mothers.

WRITTEN FOR THE AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION, AND REVISED BY
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LOUISA, MY FIRST-BORN.

WHAT a moment was that when my first tender infant was placed in my arms! It seems to me that an eternity of ages can never efface from my memory the impressions of that hour. The unending, undying existence upon which it was now just ushered, and in which its embryo faculties would unfold, expand, and ripen into maturity, awakened a tide of reflections within, while over all the bright future which rose upon my vision was cast a shadow of uncertainty, sufficient to chasten hope and to awaken trust. I recollect giving vent to my feelings in these lines of Watts—

“My God, I would not long to see
My fate with curious eyes,
What gloomy months are writ for me,
Or what bright scenes may rise”—

as the little being on whose behalf they were repeated, opened her mild eyes, for the first time, on the softened and mellow light—all unconscious of a mother's gaze.

Louisa was a child of no ordinary promise; but being my first, and therefore having no one with whom to compare her, it was natural to suppose that all children so trained would exhibit very much the same traits. Had my experience in the care of children terminated with her brief career, it would have been difficult for me to have realized that piety was not natural to the heart of childhood. I might have supposed that notwithstanding the fall and its consequent evils, there was still something of goodness left that needed only to be cultivated in order to secure piety in the subsequent life. A few years of experience, however, convinced me that the peculiar loveliness, docility and piety which my child manifested were not the effusions of any native goodness within her, but were the fruits of the Spirit.

The education of the first child is conducted in circumstances peculiar to itself. It is of course commenced without experience on the part of the mother; yet she has one advantage, and that not a small one. Her child is dependent upon her for its first impressions of truth and duty. It has no precedent by way of example; no one from whom it will, as a matter of course, learn to repeat prayers and hymns by rote, as the younger, in a well-taught family, always do, from the elder children.

Louisa was rather a delicate infant, but after her first year she was favoured with almost uninterrupted health until the brief sickness which terminated her life at the age of four years and a few weeks. She had few childish griefs; yet there was always a shade of pensiveness mingling with her mirth. Her little countenance bore an expression of thoughtfulness, even when dimpled with smiles. When only a few months old, music, especially when soft and plaintive,

would make the tears flow down her cheeks like rain-drops.

The first word spoken by a child is always an epoch in the mother's memory. Louisa had just closed her first year. She had been confined to the house for a few days by a slight illness. When sufficiently recovered, I took her to the door to breathe the fresh air. A gentle shower had just passed over the earth. The clouds lay piled in masses on the eastern hills, bright with the beams of the declining sun, and the freshened foliage was sparkling in its light.

Louisa gazed for some moments silently upon the scene, and then exclaimed with strong emotion,

“Pretty! Pretty!”

It was her first word. She had, it is true, uttered “Pa,” and “Ma,” but it was after many attempts by others to call them forth. This was spontaneous, and uttered in circumstances which could leave no doubt that a sense of the beautiful in nature existed within her infant mind.

During the night I was awakened by a slight rustling upon the floor, which I supposed to be caused by a little kitten that had probably made its way into our room. Fearing to awaken Louisa, who was sleeping in her crib at my side, I remained perfectly still, endeavouring to ascertain from what cause the noise proceeded. The rustling ceased, and amid the darkness and silence I was startled by hearing her call out, "Kit-tee! Kittee!" After which she composed herself to sleep, without so much as noticing whether I was awake or not. For more than thirty years, no music has ever sounded half so sweet to me, as the clear notes of that silvery voice breaking upon the still hour of midnight.

From this period her words came more slowly than this bursting forth of intelligent expression had led me to expect, yet my thoughts were much occupied in devising means by which I might teach her the first prayer. But she advanced far into her second year and still I had not succeeded.

At this time, the addition of another daughter to our family prevented for a short interval my attention to Louisa. Near the close of her second year, I was able to take my place again in the family, and resume my efforts at instruction.

One evening she was standing in a chair gazing at the moon, then nearly at its full, exclaiming, "Oh, bright moon! Oh, pretty moon!" and at the same time was raising herself up on her toes, and stretching upward her little hands, as if attempting to reach it. A thought struck me, and I extended my arms, to show her that it was equally beyond my own reach, at the same time asking, "Who put the moon up there, Louisa?"

"Papa," was her instant reply.

"No, my dear," I said; "your father could not reach up there;" and I stretched my arms upward again, to show her that it was very high.

"Man put it up there," she said.

“No,” I answered again; “man could not reach up there.”

After a moment’s thought she exclaimed “Great *many, many* man put it up there.”

“No, my child,” I said; but perceiving that her little mind had become wearied, I desisted, intending to resume the subject at some future time.

The next evening was pleasant. The moon was at its full. Louisa was again placed in the chair at the window. After some little direction of her thoughts to the subject, the question now came from herself—

“Mamma, who put ’e moon up there?”

I pointed to the blue heavens, far above and beyond the moon, and beyond the stars.

“*There*,” I said, “in a bright, beautiful home, is a dear, great papa. He made the moon—he put it up there—he made the stars and every thing—he made Louisa’s little hands, and feet, and head.”

But perceiving her to become bewil-

dered in her efforts to comprehend what I said, I diverted her attention to some subject better adapted to her feeble powers of thought and conception.

She had now some idea of a Being superior to her father; but what could I teach her to ask of him, which her father could not do for her?

About this time an aged minister, who was visiting at the house, on bidding her good night, said—

“You are a good little girl, and say your prayers, don’t you?”

“She looked first at him, then at me, as if to ask his meaning, when he added—

“You thank God for taking care of you, don’t you?”

The good man had, though unintentionally, given me a hint, from which I determined to profit. That night, before putting her into her little bed, I said—

“Louisa, who takes care of you while you sleep, and wakes you again in the morning?”

“You do, mamma.”

“No, I am asleep.”

“Papa does.”

“No, papa is asleep.”

“Nancy does!”

“No, Nancy is asleep. Everybody is asleep.”

I then reminded her of the great Being who made the moon and the stars, who made her and everybody, and every thing. He never sleeps. He watches over Louisa, and over her father, and mother, and over everybody. He keeps Louisa's little breath, so that she can breathe and sleep, and think nothing about it. Now would not she like to thank him for doing all this for her? And would she not like to ask him to take care of her during the night?

This great Being I taught her to address as “Our Father in heaven.” And her first prayer was simply this:—

“Our Father who art in heaven, please to take care of me and my little sister while we sleep, and please to wake us again in the morning.”

Her first morning prayer was simply thanks for protection during the night, in the same form. To this were added, from time to time, such petitions and confessions as circumstances suggested.

“I taught her that our Father in heaven was good, only good, always good—that he loved good little children—that he was patient with naughty children, and wanted them all to be good. That when Louisa is good, he smiles upon her, just as her father does. That this always makes her feel happy. That if she is naughty, her heavenly Father would be displeased, and then she would feel unhappy, just as if her father should frown upon her.

This was not taught her at once, but gradually, as circumstances opened the way. Now her little mind began to unfold its powers; and her little heart to discover its treasures of affection, not only toward her earthly parents, but toward her Father in heaven.

As she could bear it, I told her of the

Saviour; of what he had done for her, and for all. But I have reason to believe that she took in but feebly all views of him, excepting the one which represented his love for little children. This she seemed at once to comprehend in all its fulness and sweetness.

She soon learned the little verse, recorded by the condescending Saviour for the lambs of his flock, and she delighted to repeat it. At the close of every prayer, she would say, "for Jesus Christ's sake, who said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not,'"—here she would usually pause, and with a subdued earnestness of voice and manner would say, "No, mus'n't tell them not to come;" an explanation which I had given her of the phrase "forbid them not," when relating to her the touching incident which gave rise to the passage.

There now opened a rich season for instruction, a time for sowing the seeds of divine truth, not in abstract princi-

ples, but in the familiar form of hymns and Scripture stories. But of all she learned or was taught, nothing appeared to interest her so much as the story of little children brought to Jesus. When first told of the Saviour, her little heart seemed to go right to him, and she appeared to recognise in him a living friend.

At this time she had a little playmate of whom she was very fond. "Little Ma-my Libbit," as she called her infant sister, was too young to play with her. She could not even sit on the floor. Yet she delighted to amuse her with coral and bells while lying in the cradle, and could sing in half-articulate accents,

"Hush, my dear,"

while rocking her to sleep. But little Edward, the child of a dear friend and neighbour, was somewhat older—and although he was not old enough to help her pick dandelions, or "dandy flowers," as she called them, and violets, yet he

could toss back the ball which she rolled to him on the floor. She was permitted to visit him daily, and thus an hour of delightful recreation was furnished to both the little boy and herself under the eye of his sweet Christian mother.

When the hour arrived, the little girl might be heard pat! pat! patting along, with little feet, over the gravel walk, through the garden, to a place where an opening had been made in the paling. When there, her little call would bring some one to take her through and convey her safely to the house. When the hour had expired, she was as regularly returned again, and the same little bird-like call brought some one to receive her at the pleasant back-door of her own home.

During this time she was allowed to be much in the open air. A large yard shaded by trees, having good gravel-walks, with a few flowers along the borders, and an abundance of wild flowers among the grass, furnished ample room for exercise and amusement. There, be-

neath the tall trees, with the sun-light darting down through the flitting leaves and wavy branches, walking beside the little wicker-cart, amusing her infant sister within it, or gathering flowers and pebbles, while listening to the song of birds or watching the butterfly, and many a humming insect with shining wings, there, in that airy and quiet retreat, it was the happy lot of my dear child to pass the long summer days of the second and third years of her brief life.

Near the close of her second year I commenced teaching her the alphabet, the hint for doing so having been furnished by herself. The Bible, from which her father read every morning, had been accidentally left open upon a chair. Her little hands soon had hold of it, and turning over its leaves, she discovered the large letter O. Calling to me, with her finger still upon it, she exclaimed, "Moon! moon! in papa's Bible!"

As she found other moons in the

same place, I attempted to rectify the mistake, and at length succeeded in making her understand that they were not moons, but letters; and that they helped to form the words, which her father read in the morning. After this I occasionally amused her with picking out letters, but I never pressed her at all, for it seemed to me that the birds, the green grass and the flowers were far more fitting companions for her than even the prettiest picture-book.

About the close of her third year, her little play-mate became sick and died. Her father returned home one evening and told her that little Edward would never play with her any more; that he had just left him tossing upon his pillow, throwing out ~~his~~ little arms in agony—that he was dying, and would soon cease to breathe.

At first she seemed not to know how to support herself. Her grief was such as almost to produce suffocation. At length tears came to her relief. “O,

mamma!" she exclaimed, "I can't bear it that little Edward suffers so."

The little boy died and was buried. The disease being malignant, children were kept from the house, so that Louisa did not see him.

When all was over, I took her to see the mother of her little play-mate. She walked thoughtfully along without speaking a word, until we reached the steps at the entrance of the house. Here there was something in her manner which reminded me of Legh Richmond's description of entering the house of mourning. There was the same light tread, the settling of the little countenance, already in sympathy with the sorrow within. As we entered, she gently withdrew her hand from mine, and walking across the room, presented it to the bereaved mother, saying at the same time, "I am sorry for you, aunty C——, that little Edward is dead."

There was a simple pathos in her tone and manner, which cannot be described

here. The bereaved mother, in speaking of it afterward, said that no sympathy ever offered to her was like that.

The death of this child furnished me with the means of leading Louisa's thoughts forward to a future state. Little Edward would one day wake up from his sleep—she would see him again. It also enabled me to connect the unseen world with this—to show her that the good here will be happy there, and that the wicked will be unhappy.

She soon ceased to grieve for little Edward, and delighted to think of him as in heaven. Often, when visiting his mother, she would leave her play, and running to “aunty,” would ask—

“Where is little Edward now?” And the mother, instead of answering, would return the question—

“Where is he, Louisa?” and she would reply—

“Up in heaven.”

After the death of Edward, she became quite anxious to hear her little

sister speak ; and she would come to her mother and ask, " When will little Mamy Libbet talk ? " She had often asked this question before. In the winter she had been told, that when the snow was all gone, and the little birds had come, then Mary would talk. But the snow all melted away, the grass became green, the birds sang, the flowers put forth, the spring-time was succeeded by the glow of summer, and still Mary did not talk. Again came the same inquiry, and Louisa was told that when the peaches and the grapes were ripe, then she might expect to hear her little sister speak. But the fruits of autumn ripened and were gone, and the snows of winter again covered the earth, ere Mary had pronounced even her first word.

Such was the difference in the physical development of my two first children ; and it seemed to me that the same difference was manifest in their mental history. As soon as Mary could speak, she began to repeat, in scarcely in-

telligible accents, every prayer and hymn which her sister did—but how much she understood of these, it was very difficult for me to tell.

As might be expected, Louisa loved her little sister dearly. She was patient and gentle with her, never attempting by force to make the little one do as she chose. One thing distressed her greatly. It was to see her destroy the flowers which she picked and gave her. Whenever Mary did this, she would not attempt to pull them out of her little hands, but would run to her mother exclaiming, “Ma-my Libbit tear all the pretty flowers to pieces!” It was rather difficult to convince her that Mary loved the flowers when she destroyed them so speedily.

Ever since Louisa had been old enough to be taught, it had been a study with me how to make the Sabbath pleasant to her, and yet maintain its sacredness. Before she could speak, I could of course make no other alteration in

my treatment of her than what would necessarily be caused by a change in the family arrangements. The subdued tone and manner of all around would naturally produce some effect upon her; soothing her spirit, and checking that bursting forth of mirth which was encouraged on other days. As there was progress in intelligent observation, I endeavoured to make a change in her play-things, so as to make some further impression on her mind of a difference between that day and others. Some few I reserved exclusively for the Sabbath; to these I added flowers, shells, pictures, a slate and pencil, in short, whatever would keep her quietly and harmlessly employed.

It would be impossible to enumerate all the expedients to which I resorted to accomplish my object. I cannot now recollect the time when I began to restrict her in the use of her play-things, nor when I finally took them all away. I had from the first resolved on doing

this, as soon as she should be able to take scriptural views of the Sabbath. That the whole course of her treatment on that day was to her a keeping of the Sabbath, I can have no doubt. When she could read a little and could be taken to church, a proper observance of the day was comparatively easy.

At length He who instituted the Sabbath condescended to bless my poor endeavours, and Louisa began to comprehend something of the nature and design of that sacred day. I had progressed in Bible instruction as far as to the giving of the law upon Mount Sinai, and had explained to her as far as possible the fourth commandment, when one Lord's-day morning, as I was placing Mary's play-things beside her, I said to Louisa—

“Mary is too little to know that it is the holy Sabbath-day. She must have something to do, or she will be unhappy,” and I was about adding that it would be wrong for Louisa to touch them, when she anticipated me by saying, not “I

won't *touch* them," but, "I won't *want* them, mamma. I won't *want* them."

Another Sabbath morning, after Louisa was dressed for church, I told her that she might sit still now, as I wished to read. She had been reading to me as much as I thought was well for her, and I said to her that she might rest until it was time to go to church.

Soon she came to me for a pin; I gave her one and continued reading. After a short time, on looking up, I found the dear child standing before me with tears in her eyes. She was holding out the pin and a piece of paper, into which she had been pricking the flowers from her frock. This was a favourite amusement with her on week-days. A richly figured piece of chintz, a sheet of paper and a pin would often keep her busied for a long time, especially in rainy weather. Placing the chintz over the paper and confining them together, she would then prick closely and delicately around each leaf and floweret and stem, and thus make the

impression of a pretty bunch of flowers upon the paper. She had been doing this with the tiny flowers on her frock.

Holding out the paper and pin, she said, as well as her sobs would allow, "Mamma, God will be displeased with me. I have been naughty. I have not kept the holy Sabbath-day. I have been pricking these flowers into the paper from my frock."

I felt an awe upon my spirit as the dear child stood tremblingly before me, and I realized, as never before, the purity and spirituality of that worship which He requires, before whom even the angels veil their faces. I felt then that God had taken the work into his own hands, and folding the dear child in my arms, I kneeled with her before the mercy-seat; for it was only in this way that she could be soothed when she felt that she had been doing wrong.

From that time, as the light of each successive Sabbath dawned into my room, I would hear her sweet voice greeting its welcome return in notes of

thanksgiving and praise. As soon as she ascertained that I was awake, she would say, "Mamma, God has given us another pleasant Sabbath." Or, at other times, "We must thank God for giving us another pleasant Sabbath."

Very sweet were the prayers which this dear child now offered. Although she needed no form, yet she continued to use the same form of address, and the same close which were first taught her. From this time her mind seemed to me like a well-watered garden, bringing forth all manner of pleasant fruits. The truths of the gospel, instilled into it in much weakness and imperfection on the part of her teacher, were richly watered with the dews of divine grace, while the clear shining of the Sun of Righteousness caused them to spring forth in the sweet graces of infant piety.

Her mind now began to unfold so rapidly, and events of interest (to her mother at least) to crowd so thickly into her little span of life, that memory fails

to place them in the order of occurrence. A brief selection will be made, without regard to order, from the incidents of her fourth year. An outline at best—for the beauty and loveliness of infant piety can only be fully portrayed by the same divine hand that implants it in the heart.

Although a child of only three summers, yet, as the minister's eldest daughter, Louisa was often invited to dine with her father's parishioners, who were of course all *uncles* and *aunts* to the little girl. On returning one afternoon, from having dined out, she handed her mother a little pin-cushion and needle-book which had been given her, saying that "Annie" (the little girl that gave them to her) was "as sweet as a rose." Then in a tone and manner expressive of surprise and disappointment she added, "Mamma, uncle W—— don't say 'Our Father.'"

It was afterward ascertained, that when seated at table, she had folded her little hands, and sat thus until every eye was

fixed upon her, when she quietly unfolded them and passed her plate, but made no comments at the time.

Occasionally there was a beaming forth of intelligence which surprised even myself. One mild, bright day in winter, Louisa was amusing her little sister with a doll in the dining-room. While waiting for dinner to be brought in, I took up a book and opened to Percival's (I think) Ode to Consumption. A part of it was so exceedingly beautiful that I read it aloud. Perceiving a little waving motion in the sun-light beyond the table, I looked and found that Louisa had popped up her little head, and was listening with delighted attention. On seeing that I noticed her, she exclaimed, "Oh, mamma, how beautiful! 'The purple,' and 'the cheek of snow!' Do read it again." I read the whole, while she listened, and it seemed to me with a measure of intelligent interest belonging rather to a person of mature and culti-

vated mind, than a child who had not yet numbered four winters.

Having lost my third infant, I resolved, as soon as Mary should be able to speak, to dismiss the young nurse who had assisted me in the care of my children, and to devote myself exclusively to them. When Mary had closed her second year, I put my plan in execution. I now found Louisa's aid invaluable. She was as a guardian angel to Mary, although there was scarcely a perceptible difference in the size of the two little ones. I could place them upon the door-steps, on the sunny side of the house, and whenever Mary was inclined to step down, Louisa would gently hold her back by some new invention which her suggestive mind was quick in furnishing for the amusement of her charge.

I now devoted some time each day to the instruction of Louisa, teaching her to read, spell, and sew, with such other little things as were suited to her capacity. It was a treat to her to have

words explained, when she had spelled them. In doing this, I selected only those which could be illustrated by familiar objects; such as 'transparent,' for instance—in explaining which, the glass in the window and the clear water in the basin were made use of. One day while she was sewing, a coloured woman, who had some care of her, was standing between her and the window, when she complained that "Nancy took up all her light." The word transparent occurred to me, and I suggested it to her, when she immediately said, (to the no small amusement of the coloured woman,) "Nancy isn't transparent!"

As the ground became dry in the spring, and the grass and flowers put forth, I allowed the little ones to run freely in the garden. But this was only a small space, for we had left our large house and grounds, and I was obliged to take them abroad daily for exercise. Sometimes their father would take his

little girls to ride in the country, and see the lambs, and chickens, and trees and green fields; when Louisa would return with some available addition to her little stock of ideas.

She could now, with spelling, read the long words; she could also earn her penny for the "Juvenile Mite Society," by sewing for her mother; and it was so easy to ply the little being with motives, that there was danger of overtaking her physical as well as her mental powers. When she commenced sewing for the Mite Society, I had told her of the little Indian girl for whose benefit the money was designed,—how she had wandered about without a home, had slept on a bear-skin, having no kind mother to put her to bed at night or teach her to pray to our Father in heaven—so that she might labour intelligently for the object.

At one time she manifested a little reluctance to do her small task at sewing. Partly by way of reproof, and partly for encouragement, I said to her,

“Little Lydia then cannot have her penny.” She immediately caught up her work, and while plying her little fingers with all her might, said, without raising her eyes from her work, “Now will papa get up his horse and ride away as fast as he can, and tell Mr. Kingsbury* not to send little Lydia back to sleep on her bear-skin again? I am earning the penny.”

I quickly found that the dear child was ill, and that it was on this account, and not from any reluctance to work, that she had objected to sewing. It has cost me many a pang of the heart-ache since, to recall her image as she plied the needle with trembling hands and aching head. But the time was fast drawing on when she should no longer be exposed to suffer through the mistakes of others; for the good Shepherd would cause her to rest in the bosom of his love.

Being detained from public worship one Sabbath, I thought I would try

* The Missionary among the Indians.

Louisa with "Little Henry and his Bearer," and see if she could read it intelligibly. Finding that she could do this, with but little spelling, I allowed her to read it to me at intervals during the day, while I attended to her little sister, who was not quite well. As she approached the close I was often obliged to soothe her, she was so overcome by the story. At length she could refrain no longer, and with a voice broken with sobs she exclaimed, "mamma, I can't bear it! Why won't Boosa throw away his wooden gods, and love Henry's God?" I told her that Boosa had done this. That Henry and his poor Bearer were, as I trusted, both happy together in heaven—that they would never be separated any more. I then determined never to excite her in the same manner again.

In looking over the brief sketch which I have now given, it occurs to me that I may have left the impression that Louisa was treated in a manner too sober for such a little child. But whatever may

have been true in regard to this, or any other defect in the mode of her training, one thing is certain, she was neither a melancholy nor an unhappy child. So far from this, there was a sprightliness and even brilliancy in her mirth, which I have rarely seen equalled in other children.

And here, after a long interval of years, I can vividly recall the clear lighting up of her countenance, and the cheerful outgushing of her feelings, in prospect of a frolic with her father. Many a ride she got about the house, mounted on his shoulders, and clinging around his neck, to avoid being tossed off by the rapidity of his motion. He could never withstand her gentle, though expressive challenge. Sometimes it would be a slight pull at the skirt of his coat. Again, she would wrap herself in his gown, and glide about with so much dexterity amid its ample folds as to elude his grasp for some time.

At one time, in the midst of a merry

frolic, she suddenly exclaimed that she had lost her thimble in her father's gown. Search was made for it immediately; the gown was examined, and every crack and cranny of the room explored, but to no purpose—the little girl steadily insisting that her thimble was in papa's gown. Years afterward, a little thimble was taken from among the thick wadding under the lining; the tiny hole through which it had slipped being so small as to elude detection.

Every parent knows full well the feeling which is called forth, when something belonging to a loved and lost one comes suddenly to view. The pang awakened in the breast by such a memento, shows, that however the hold may have been loosened, yet there has been no severance of the tie which binds the heart of the mother to her departed child.

And here the overwhelming thought comes over the mind, that every thing which the mother does for her little one,

however insignificant it may appear at the time, she does for eternity! The reader will, I trust, pardon this digression; for the subject is one which surely must find an answering chord in the heart of every mother.

But while this dear child was blessed with her full share of mirthfulness and childish glee, she had, at the same time, some traits which seemed to belong to a maturer age than she was permitted to attain. There was a chasteness, a refinement, even in her most frolicksome moods; and then she had what appeared to be an intuitive sense of, and regard for the happiness and comfort of others.

An incident occurs to my mind here, which is so characteristic of her little self, that I cannot forbear relating it. Louisa was at the house of a friend. A young lady, who was putting her to bed for the night, was suddenly called down, before she had done what was indispensable for the comfort of the child. In-

tending to return in a moment, she hastened down, where she found friends who had unexpectedly arrived, and by whom she was detained until a late hour in the evening, when recollecting herself and hastening to the chamber, she found Louisa in a wakeful and suffering state, and she began bitterly to reproach herself for her forgetfulness and neglect. Louisa, on seeing her thus distressed, said in a soothing, comforting tone, "Oh, cousin Caroline, you *only forgot*."

In this family, it was her privilege to visit freely. The mother, (an excellent lady and one of her father's parishioners,) often begged away the little girl for a few days; and the young ladies, her daughters, found her but little interruption to their daily avocations, it was so easy to amuse her. A box of shells and pebbles, a few pictures, or a basket of blocks, would keep her pleasantly occupied for a whole morning. The head of the family was a true gentleman, refined and intelligent, and he delighted to en-

tertain the little girl with pictures and other things. She was seated next to him at table, where he took great pains with her position; also in teaching her how to use her spoon and fork. Her visits in this family were, as might be supposed, highly improving. She always returned from them with an added grace of manner and a fresh supply to her little stock of home enjoyments.

A glance at her habits of intercourse with persons advanced in life, convinces me that they were far more cordial and cheerful than in most children.

I can see her now running from her play at the call of some friend, and taking her place on the knee, responding to the question, "Do you love me?" "*I do*;" laying a particular stress on the word "*do*." She never answered in the monosyllables "yes," or "no," but always substituted the verb expressive of the feeling or act. For instance, "Will you do this, or that?" "I will." "Are you happy or glad?" "I am." The thrust-

ing forward of the little shoulder, the pouting lip, or even the cold, uncomplaining countenance, were never in a single instance seen in her. The child seemed to live but for the happiness of others. The spirit of a purer world had been breathed into her's, and under its influence she was fast ripening for a participation in its society and its blessedness.

One pleasant afternoon in summer, while sitting with my little ones in the nursery, busily engaged in sewing, Louisa, who appeared all absorbed in amusing her little sister, suddenly rose, and coming to me with a countenance all radiant with her thoughts, addressed me in a manner which I could not but regard as extraordinary for a child in any circumstances, and particularly for one who appeared to be thinking only of her doll and her little sister.

“Mamma,” she said, “you don’t know but a little, but God knows a great deal. You don’t know what is best, but God knows what is best.” Having delivered

her message (for to me it came like one from above) she as suddenly returned to her play, all unconscious of its weighty import, but evidently with sweet thoughts of God, and of her own dear mother.

The bloom of summer, with its fervid heat, had nearly passed away, when Louisa finished her fourth year. Shortly after this, we took the little girl to see "baby-sister's bed," as she called the little mound of earth in the burying-ground. We had been some time in the yard, silently reading the inscriptions on the stones which marked the last resting-places of friends, or absorbed in our own meditations, when Louisa came to me with a request which she had evidently set her heart upon having granted. "Mamma," she said, "won't you come here some time with me alone, without papa." I want to stay a very long time. I want to plant a little rose on baby-sister's little bed."

Just two weeks from that time we opened the little mound of earth, and

planted within it, not a frail rose, to bloom a few brief summer mornings, and then fade and be no more; but an imperishable flower, to be transplanted, again to bloom, and for ever to shed its fragrance in the paradise of God!

The lengthening shadows betokened the setting sun, when the little girl came to me again.

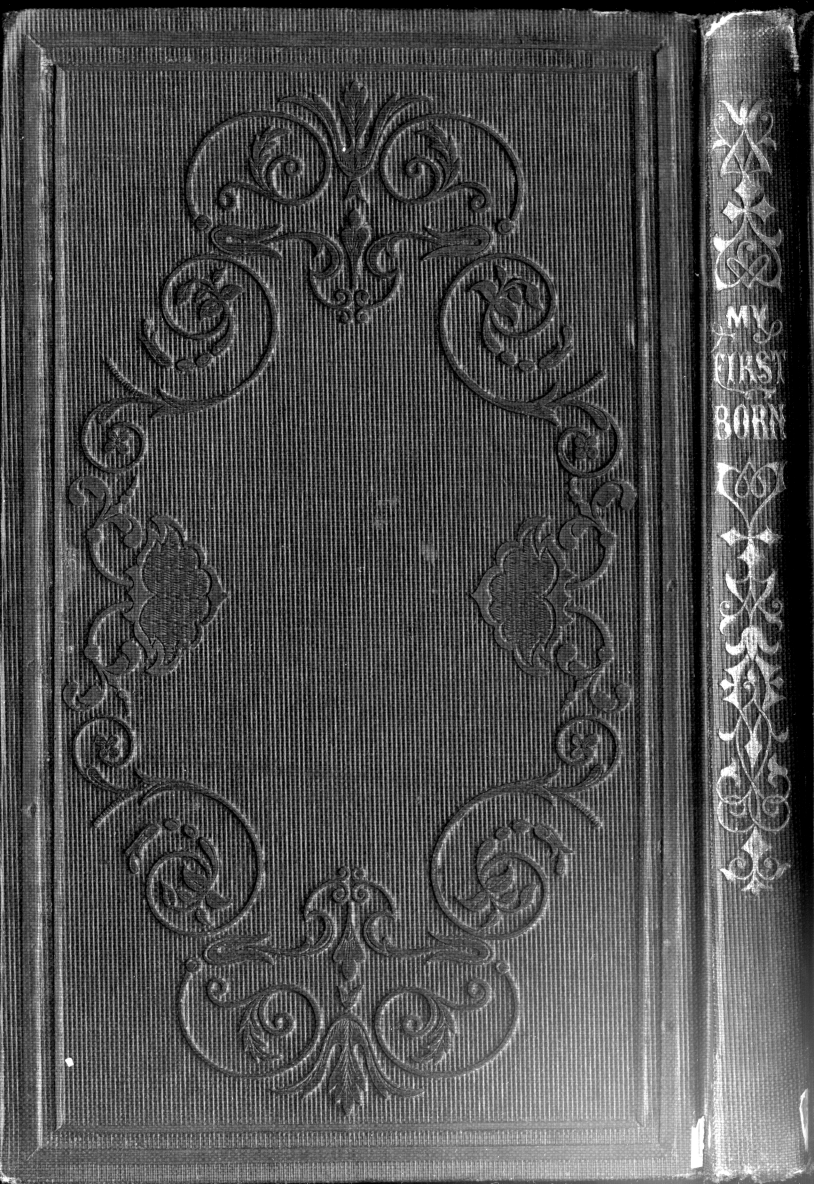
“Mamma,” she said, “I shall sleep here in my little bed in this burying-ground?”

“Yes,” I answered. It was very common for her to put questions in this form.

“You will sleep here? And papa will sleep here?”

“Yes,” I again answered, for I did not wish to perplex the child with uncertainty as to the last resting-place either of herself or her parents, “we shall all sleep here.”

She then added, “In that pleasant morning when Jesus Christ comes to wake up all the people, will he wake up papa and you? Will he wake up me?”



MY
FIRST
BORN

the words of that blessed book which teaches the Christian not to "sorrow as without hope." In your prayers, when you rise in the morning, and when you take your rest, say, "Holy Father, I beseech thee to support and comfort the parents of Louisa. Enable me to imitate her in those things which were pleasing to thee. Give me a new heart, that I may love goodness, and put my trust in the Saviour of sinners. May I reverence thy Sabbaths, and relieve the children of want and ignorance. Grant that when the grave shall be my bed, I may feel no fear; but with joy ascend to praise thee for ever, like the angels in heaven."



awake the dead. Perhaps you may have wept, but forgot to inquire, "Where is God my Maker? who teacheth me more than the beasts of the earth, and hath made me wiser than the fowls of heaven?"

Strive to bring this providence home to your own bosom. Let it be as a monitor, exclaiming, "The time is short." Let it make you more industrious, more charitable, more anxious to be at peace with Him, who for our sins is justly offended. Let your alms be the fruit of self-denial, and given in humility. Strive to please that bountiful Being who hath granted you health, and life, and is able, when they vanish, to give you life everlasting.

Think of your minister in this affliction. Remember how often he has prayed for your salvation. When his people mourn, or are sick, he sympathizes in their griefs. If any of you were to die, he would feel afflicted, and endeavour to comfort your parents and friends from

heathen. No wonder that they should shudder at the darkness of the pit, for they have never heard of the resurrection. No wonder that they cling to this miserable life; they have no promise of a better. You will assist, dear children, in pouring upon their souls the hope of heaven. You have already done it, and I trust that God will bless your efforts. Perhaps the soul of that child whom you are now supporting, may hereafter join in the song of the redeemed. May you all unite with it in a song of thanksgiving to the Lamb that was slain!

The death of this companion is to you a strong admonition of the uncertainty of life. You have been taught it before; but perhaps it has never led you to say, "*I too must die.*" You may have seen some beautiful infant, pale in the arms of its mother, like a blossom full of dew, yet smitten on its stalk. You may have seen it laid in the earth, and covered with damp, cold clods, to rise no more till the voice of the archangel shall

Ought it not rather to be represented to the infant pilgrim as a journey to a “far country,” for which daily preparation should be made, by prayers of penitence, and deeds of love—by striving to imitate the character of its glorious inhabitants?

Had Louisa lived, my dear young friends, she would doubtless have been trained by her parents in the paths of goodness and benevolence. She would have rejoiced in continuing to meet you here, and aid in your charitable designs. But the wise God who seeth in darkness hath removed her, as a fair bud is withered ere it opens into a perfect flower. You are yet spared, my dear children. You are still permitted to look upon the fields, and the waters, and the glorious sky which the hand of your Maker hath stretched out. Your hands, full of life and vigour, are still suffered to cast their mite into the treasury of your Lord.

Your ears, unsealed by the dust of death, still hear of the miseries of the

tressing sickness, she said, "Mamma, I don't know as God will think it best for me to get well. Perhaps he will think it best for me to die and go to heaven." So much instruction had she received on the subject of death, and so familiarly had she been accustomed to speak of it, that it exhibited to her nothing of gloom—no image of fear. The grave where she now sleeps, she considered as a place from whence she should arise and be received by her Redeemer. Might not older Christians learn something from the example of this little child?—They who speak so seldom of death, as if they would fain forget that for this end they came into the world; or as if they had already forgotten that "to die is to accomplish life," and that to be with Christ is great gain. Ought not parents and instructors of children to converse with them more frequently of this event?—Not with a gloomy and austere countenance, as of something that they themselves greatly dreaded.

the Bible. Though only four years old, she read from her father's Bible, the afternoon before her fatal disease commenced, that affecting permission of our Saviour, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." "Now," said she, "I can read about the Lord Jesus Christ, and then I shall be good." The first two nights that she was sick, she said to her mother, "Lay down beside me, and tell me all about the Saviour, and when I know all about him, I shall be good."

She seemed not to have that fear of death which children usually express. When in health, she had visited the grave of her infant sister, and exclaimed, "What a pleasant bed!" When afterward it appeared that she was also appointed to lay down in that narrow house, and she was inquired of where she thought she should go if she died, her answer was, "I will go to heaven." In the early part of her short and dis-

her fear that her Father in heaven would be offended with her for trifling on his holy day, nor would she rest satisfied until she had knelt and entreated his forgiveness. "I felt then," said her mother, "that God was doing his own work, for she was evidently under divine teaching." She was often in prayer. The morning on which she was taken ill, she was observed to kneel in her chamber, and confess those errors which she could recollect to have committed. She had a form of prayer composed for her stated devotion. To this she was accustomed to add petitions which arose from the circumstances in which she happened to be placed, and would sometimes ask with affecting simplicity, "Now will God do it?" The night before her sickness, after having asked that the Almighty would make herself and her little sister "good children," she added, "Please to make all the little children in Miss R——'s school, good children."

She was desirous to be able to read in

When she awoke on that consecrated season, she would say, "Oh, what a pleasant Sabbath morning, mamma; will you kneel down and thank our God for giving it to us?"

She was sincerely affectionate to her little sister. When prepared to go to the public service of the Sabbath, she would sometimes say, "Mamma, let us kneel down and ask our Father in heaven to take care of little Mary while we are gone." "Let us pray, too, that he would take care of papa and us, while we are at meeting." She seemed to be desirous of obeying her Maker, as far as she was capable of understanding his will. One Sabbath morning she had been reading a long time, until she was weary. Her mother then told her she might sit down and be very quiet, as she wished to read herself. She took her chair, and began with a pin to prick some paper, which she held in her hand. Presently she arose with tears in her eyes, and expressed with much feeling

Is it not also a great loss to retain no serious impressions when your dear companions go down to the place of silence?

“Shall they suffer, shall they die in vain?”

In the character of the dear departed Louisa, there were some excellencies which should be kept in remembrance. They are worthy of your imitation. They have already been related to you* with more feeling and energy than my pen can hope to attain; yet the memory is often so treacherous with regard to the best things, that “line should be upon line,” and “precept upon precept.”

She whom we wish to contemplate, though very young, was remarkably attentive to the duties of the Sabbath. As soon as its sacred nature was explained to her, she expressed her willingness to lay aside, on that day, those toys and sources of amusement in which children at that early age are often indulged.

* By the father of Louisa, the Rev. Mr. —, to the children of his parish.

Mrs. Sigourney's Address.

TO THE HARTFORD JUVENILE MITE SOCIETY, ON
THE OCCASION OF LITTLE LOUISA'S DEATH.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS—

I wish to address a few words to you on a melancholy, yet interesting subject. You will probably think that I allude to the death of Louisa. I know that she was a member of your Mite Society, and that many of you loved her as a companion, and followed her mournfully to the spot where her lifeless remains rest. And shall this be all? Will you return to your employments, to your sports, and in a few weeks forget the emotion with which you contemplated her open grave? It ought not to be so. An ancient writer has said that "it is a great loss to lose an affliction."

Meekly her infant sister's bed
She mark'd with gath'ring verdure dress'd,
Unconscious then how soon her head
Beneath that kindred turf should rest.

Now round Louisa's lowly grave
Shall little footsteps print the green,
And sporting groups their gambols waive,
Mutely to point the mournful scene ;

While many a glowing brow shall wear
The unaccustom'd trace of wo,
That she who breathed with them the prayer,
Must sleep so cold and dark below.

Her parents! (ah! their bitter tear
Long at that name beloved shall start;)
Yet if there be a joy to cheer
Such anguish in a Christian's heart—

'Tis when to faith sublime is given
Her God in darkness to adore;
'Tis when a mother meets in heaven
The angel that on earth she bore.

Lines by Mrs. Sigourney,

ON THE DEATH OF LOUISA.

THE head which time with silver crowns,
Kind nature points to silent clay;
The atheist, when affliction frowns,
Would dash the cup of life away;

But she, to mouldering earth withdrawn,
Nor age had felt, nor anguish known;
Fair as the bud that greets the morn,
Yet withers ere its dews have flown.

To hover round a sister's love,
To win a parent's fondest kiss,
To learn the name of Him above,
Fill'd up her transient span with bliss.

Religion, too, with voice divine,
Would bend to prompt her early theme,
And oft the Saviour's smile benign
Came mingling with her softest dream.

From the pale moon's reflected ray
She caught instruction pure and mild,
And even the Sabbath's holy day
Was revered by that duteous child.

that now she will sin no more ; no more will grieve the love of her heavenly Father, but will for ever walk in the light of his countenance, and know the full joy of his salvation.

“Joy, joy be the theme of the angel throng,
Let the temples of paradise ring with the song,
For a purified soul to its God has risen,
A deathless spirit hath reach'd its heaven.”

It is no small satisfaction to feel that now all her earnest desires to “know all about the Lord Jesus Christ” have been fully answered ; the Lamb himself being her teacher and guide.

Surely the removal of such a child, seems more like a translation than a death. Such do not die :

“They set, as sets the morning star, which
Goes not down behind the darken'd west,
But sinks away into the light of heaven.”

had retired too far within the vail of death, to give back a token, if indeed it heeded the mother's voice.

A few hours of apparent unconsciousness, and then the little spirit was released and taken safely into the ark of infinite love!

My thoughts love to cluster around the circumstances of the life and death of my child; to contrast her present immortal, with her past earthly and dying life. I love to contemplate, and dwell upon the change. Earth for heaven—a perishable mansion for a palace the foundations whereof are of sapphire and the gates of pearl—the garden of her home for the garden of paradise; there to walk beneath the shade of that tree whose leaf does not wither, and by those pure waters which gladden the city of God. To reflect with grateful feeling on what she has escaped—the seductions of a tempting world—the pangs of remorse attendant upon guilty departures from God—to feel assured

manner, she added, "please to make all the little children in Miss R.'s school, good children." When the children were told of this, after her death, they immediately referred to her manner when last in the school, and said, "She must have been thinking about it then."

After this night she sunk very rapidly. The last day of her illness, she was apparently unconscious of what was passing around her. She lay most of the time quietly, but her breathing, and the occasional throwing out of her arms convulsively, showed that the last breath would soon be drawn.

After the dews of death had gathered upon her brow, there was a low murmuring from those parted lips, beneath the drooping eyelids, "Mamma, you hurt me." It would have been a relief then, if the dear one could have been made to understand that it was not "mamma's" hand that she felt,—that it was but the loosing of the "silver cord," and soon it would be over: but the parting spirit

usual cheerfulness, "I do want to see little Mary." But Mary had been removed from the house; and when the morning came, her mind had sunk back again, overpowered by disease.

In the hour of quiet referred to, she had some pleasant conversation with the lady who watched with her. It was very pleasant to Louisa to have her stay by her. At one time she said to her—

"Miss Emily, I do love you dearly;" and then added that if she got well, she would "embroider" her a pin-cushion.

This lady taught a school of little girls, and she had often taken Louisa into it as a visiter. The last time she was in the school, which was just before her illness, she was observed to look round thoughtfully upon each one, without smiling, as she had been won't to do, whenever her eye met them. That night, when saying her prayers, she paused after the petition, "please to make me and my little sister good children," and then in an earnest, yet tender

ing down the sickening draught with the sleeve of her night-gown, until the cup could be brought.

One afternoon, as she lay quiet upon her pillow, I took to her an ivory fan, which had been given her when she was only two years old. In health it had been a great treat to her to have this fan. Not a thread of its delicate tracery and carving of lace-work had ever been broken by her little fingers. She took the fan, opened it, and spreading it upon her bosom, she folded her hands and closed her eyes, as if in prayer. I removed it with the feeling that she had done with earthly things.

She said but little during her sickness, having been from the first overpowered by disease. Only once during her illness did she express a wish for any thing, except the "cold fresh water—in the cup." At one time, as the morning approached, there was a mitigation of the unfavourable symptoms. Her mind seemed to recover itself, and she said with her

tinctly, "I don't want to get well—I want to die?"

"But where will you go," I said, "if you do die!"

"I will go to heaven," said she, in the same little, feeble voice.

"Who will you see there, my dear child?" I asked.

"I will see Jesus," she meekly replied. When told that it would please Jesus if she took her medicine, she immediately swallowed it.

After this, she showed much fortitude in taking what was given her; a little "cold fresh water—in the cup," as she said, being all she wanted after each nauseous dose.

One day her kind physician brought her a fine peach, and told her she should have some of it after her medicine. Placing the peach in her hand, he carried her the medicine, which she took; but turning away from the juicy and tempting fruit, she pointed to the well-known little cup; at the same time hold-

erful and confiding in the promises made to believing parents! As it was, I think I was enabled to surrender her entirely to God. I felt that she was his—that she had never been mine—a blessing only lent; and now that he was taking her back, he was taking only his own. I felt that notwithstanding all my deficiencies, yet on his part all had been done to prepare the little one for the momentous change that awaited her. And now, on looking back after the lapse of several years, and carefully reviewing all the circumstances of that little life, I can say, that in respect to the child, “He hath done all things well.” But to return to the narrative.

Louisa soon began to loathe her medicine. After having taken repeated doses, she turned her head away from one which I carried to her.

“Louisa,” I said, “I want to have you take this. I fear you will not get well if you do not.”

“Mamma,” said she, faintly, yet dis-

call forth the anxious inquiry, nor what method I took to comfort the child on this first flashing in upon her mind of the painful conviction that her parents, in common with others, were sinners, and needed pardon as well as they; for disease, with rapid advances, was fastening upon its little victim, and soon she was prostrated beneath its power.

How priceless appeared the soul of my child to me then! How light, how trifling, appeared all I had done, or had attempted to do, to prepare it for the eternity into which I felt it was just about to be ushered. The changeless nature of that state, too, was to me an overwhelming thought. Whatever she was then, I felt that she must remain throughout the endless ages of eternity. Mistakes, if I had made them, it was then too late to correct. But it was a sense of my deficiencies, which most oppressed me. Had I thought of her dying so soon, how much more earnest and serious I might have been; how much more pray-

more fearful. But it was her state of mind which made me feel thus. I had carefully avoided every intimation that there was any thing alarming in her symptoms, and then the remedies had been applied so early that there was every reason to hope for success from the medical treatment under which we had placed her. She might perhaps have inferred the dangerous nature of her disease from the fact that her play-mate had died of the same the year previous, but of this I was never certain. One thing appeared plain. Her mind, from some cause hidden to me, had been led to contemplate the subject of death in such a manner, as forced upon me the conviction that her own death could not be far distant. I kneeled and commended myself and my dear child to God. As I rose, she fastened her eyes searchingly upon me, and with a troubled and anxious look, said—

“Mamma, have you been wicked to God?” I know not what I had said to

her to sleep. She was restless, for the fever was burning in her veins. Soon she said—

“Mamma, won’t you and papa be sure to ask God, every night and every morning, if he won’t think it best for me to get well?”

I told the dear child that we need not wait till morning,—we would do it then. The next morning, at her request, I carried her down to family prayers. She appeared weak, and I took her in my arms, but her little countenance bore no marks of disease, and her father thought her illness too slight to notice. On taking her back to her room, she knelt down by her little chair and offered such a prayer as I never heard, either before or since, from infant lips. As she seated herself in her little chair, she said, “Mamma, perhaps God will not think it best for me to get well. Perhaps he will think it best for me to die and go to heaven.”

My heart was becoming more . and

afternoon in autumn, as she was playing with little Mary on the grass-plat by the door, that I called her to me, and opening the family Bible, I pointed to the passage that had always been so pleasant to her. In a clear, sweet voice, she read, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

"Now," said the little girl, "I can read in papa's Bible all about the Lord Jesus Christ; then I shall know all about him, and then I shall be good." It was the first and the last verse that she ever read in this book of God.

At midnight, symptoms of the dysentery appeared. She took what was given her, and then said, "Now, mamma, lie down close by me, and tell me all about the Lord Jesus Christ. Then I shall know all about him, and then I shall be good."

I did as she requested, and putting my arms around her, whispered to her of the Saviour's love. But I could not soothe

Will papa open his eyes and speak to me? Shall I look upon him? Shall I know him?"

I had only time, to answer "We shall all know each other then,"—when we were summoned to the carriage, and we left the peaceful enclosure, soon to return to it under far different circumstances.

That scene in the grave-yard is as fresh in my mind as if it were now passing. I can recall with perfect distinctness that thoughtful little countenance, those soft eyes, the tender, yet earnest tones of that little voice, the quiet hour, and the calmness of the little girl, all contrasting strongly with the scenes of that august and awful morning, about which she was questioning.

Louisa had never read in the Bible. I preferred that she should not do this until she could read without spelling the words. So I had myself read to her from that sacred book. But now I felt that the time had come for her to commence reading it. It was a pleasant